



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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J. TYLER McCAULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

May 9, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley *JTM*  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – HATHAWAY-  
SYCAMORES CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES - EL NIDO GROUP  
HOME**

We have completed a review of El Nido Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

El Nido Group Home is a forty-two bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 11-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, El Nido Group Home was providing services for 18 DCFS children, one Probation child, and 19 privately placed children.

El Nido Group Home is located in the Fifth District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

### **Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address a few deficient areas.

El Nido Group Home needs to clean the front exterior of the school building and clean or replace the carpet in the main dining and recreation hall. Additionally, the Group Home needs to replace the shower curtains in Rowland cottage, repair the faucets in Baldwin cottage, replace the bed coverings and pillows, and repair the desks in the bedrooms. The Group Home also needs to develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include short and long term goals.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:ec  
[http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group\\_home.asp](http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp)

### **Attachments**

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer  
William Martone, Executive Director, The Sycamores El Nido  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Hathaway-Sycamores  
El Nido Group Home  
2933 North El Nido Drive  
Altadena, California 91001  
Phone: 626-395-7100  
License Number: 191200662  
Rate Classification Level: 14**

## **I. Facility and Environment**

### **Method of assessment – Observation**

#### **Comments:**

El Nido Group Home is located in a residential community. Overall, the exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped. However, the front exterior of the school building has debris and a build-up of dirt and leaves.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the carpet throughout the main dining and recreation hall is dirty and worn. In Rowland cottage, the shower curtains in both bathrooms are dirty, torn, and are not properly hung. In Baldwin cottage, the water pressure is low in bathroom two.

Overall the Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable. However, in all of the bedrooms, the bed coverings are worn and faded and the pillows are flat. The desks are worn and have writing on them. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Hathaway-Sycamores management:**

- a. Clean the front exterior of the school building.
- b. Clean or replace the carpet in the main dining and recreation hall.
- c. Replace the torn shower curtains in the bathrooms in Rowland cottage.
- d. Repair or replace the faucets in bathroom two in Baldwin cottage.
- e. Replace all linens and pillows in the children's bedrooms.
- f. Repair or replace the desks in the children's bedrooms.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Eight**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current. However, the NSPs are not comprehensive and do not include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

## **Recommendation**

2. Hathaway-Sycamores management develop comprehensive NSPs that are specific, realistic, time limited and include short term and long term goals.

## **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Eight****Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**IV. Recreation and Activities****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Eight****Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication.

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Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VI. Personal Rights**

**Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

**Sample size: Eight**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Eight**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to

select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose. The Group Home also provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**



Ms. Candace Rhue  
Group Home Audit Supervisor  
Department of Auditor-Controller  
500 West Temple Street, Room 515-A  
Los Angeles, California 90012-2766

March 23, 2007

Dear Ms. Rhue,

This letter is written as a follow up to a visit and review of **The Hathaway-Sycamores El Nido Group Home**, license # 197804907, conducted by auditor Elaine Clark. The visit took place on November 28, 2006. The report indicates that there are two areas that require corrective action. Those areas are:

**Facility and Environment and Program Services**

**Response and Corrective Action Plan to the Group Home Monitoring Review:**

**I. Facility and Environment:**

- a. Clean the front exterior of the school building.
- b. Replace or clean the carpet in the main dining and recreation halls.
- c. Replace the torn shower curtains in the bathrooms in Rowland Cottage.
- d. Replace the faucets in bathroom two in Baldwin Cottage.
- e. Replace all the linens and pillows in the children's bedrooms.
- f. Refinish or replace the desks in the children's bedrooms.

*All of the above mentioned areas requiring repairs, replacement and cleaning were addressed and completed by January 5, 2007.*

**II. Program Services:**

- a. The Hathaway-Sycamores' management develop comprehensive NSPs that are specific, realistic, time limited and include short term and long term goals.



*In order to address the recommendations, The Hathaway-Sycamores' has revised their Needs and Services Plan form. Included in this correspondence is a template designed to ensure that the Needs and Services Plans are comprehensive, specific, realistic and, time limited. In addition, short and long term goals will be included as part of the residents' treatment.*

*Additionally, the child's treatment team, including their individual Clinician, Program Supervisor, Facilitator and Residential Counselors have received initial training on how to develop comprehensive treatment plans, which include short and long term goals that are realistic and time limited. Trainings on developing appropriate treatment plans and goals will be conducted on a regular basis.*

*It is the responsibility of the Clinical Director to train the members of the treatment team on how to develop comprehensive treatment plans. The Clinical Director and Clinical Supervisor are responsible for overseeing, monitoring and ensuring that The Needs and Services Plan meet the appropriate criteria. Both the Clinical Director and the Clinical Supervisor will review The Initial Needs and Services Plan within 30 days of admission to the program. They will then monitor The Needs and Services Plan on a quarterly basis. This will occur with the clinical staff during individual supervision and with the treatment team as needed.*

*It is our policy and practice to make sure that we are in compliance with our program statement, all contracts, DCFS, Probation, and Title 22 requirements. We will continue to monitor ourselves to ensure that we are in compliance.*

*The people responsible to ensure that we are in compliance with our contracts/policies at The Hathaway-Sycamores are the individual Unit Supervisors. It is their responsibility to do weekly inspections and to ensure that the cottages are maintained appropriately, and in compliance.*

*Maintenance issues are brought to the attention of the Director of Plant Operations. It is then his responsibility to ensure that the issues are addressed.*

*It is the role of our Quality Assurance Committee, our Safety Committee and the Residential Director to ensure that there is follow-up and completion of any corrective action plan.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Shelly Knowles

Director of Residential Services